Updated January 10, 2020

For Immediate Release

BERKELEY REP ANNOUNCES THE SHOW THAT SET NEW YORK CITY ON FIRE, GATZ
CREATED AND PERFORMED BY THE
OBIE AWARD-WINNING ELEVATOR REPAIR SERVICE
Captivating six-hour production can only be seen on the West Coast

October 15, 2019 – Berkeley Repertory Theatre is thrilled to announce the highly anticipated special event of this season, Gatz, which enacts the beloved classic novel The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald and is directed by John Collins, to create a once in a lifetime experience and is sure to be the most talked about event of 2019-20 arts season.

The stunning theatrical ensemble Elevator Repair Service makes its electrifying Berkeley Rep debut with Gatz, an astonishing tour de force.

The winner of two Lucille Lortel Awards, three Elliott Norton Awards, and an Obie Award, Gatz has enthralled audiences around the globe, from New York to Lisbon and Los Angeles to Abu Dhabi.

Critics on both sides of the pond have raved about Gatz:

“[A] work of singular imagination and intelligence,” says the New York Times. “The most remarkable achievement in theater not only of this year but also of this decade.”

“This could be mere event theatre gimmickry or mind-gnawingly boring, but every aspect of the production is so brilliantly conceived and executed that all doubts are overcome.”
The Independent (London)

Show Description
An anonymous office worker at a shabby small business finds a copy of The Great Gatsby on his desk one morning, and starts to read aloud. At first his coworkers hardly notice. But after a series of strange coincidences, it’s no longer clear whether he’s reading the book or the book is transforming him.

View trailer here: https://www.berkeleyrep.org/season/1920/14955.asp#tabbed-nav=seehear


Gatz begins on Thursday, February 13, 2020 and runs through Sunday, February 23, 2020. Individual tickets are $125 ($115 if you’re under 35) and can be purchased online at berkeleyrep.org or by phone at 510 647-2949 beginning Wednesday, October 16, 2019. Subscription holders can purchase tickets now.
Running time
Each performance of Gatz runs 6 hours, plus two 15-minute intermissions and a 2-hour dinner break.

Chapters 1–3: 2 hours
Intermission: 15 minutes
Chapters 4–5: 1 hour and 10 minutes
Dinner break: 2 hours
Chapters 6–7: 1 hour and 25 minutes
Intermission: 15 minutes
Chapters 7–9: 1 hour and 25 minutes
(Chapters 4–5 have a running time that varies slightly.)

John Collins (Director) John Collins founded Elevator Repair Service (ERS) in 1991. Since then he has directed or co-directed all of the company’s productions while also serving as the company’s artistic director. ERS productions directed by John include Cab Legs (1997), Room Tone (2002), Gatz (2006), The Select (2011), Arguendo (2013), and 14 others. Recent projects include ERS’s production of Kate Scelsa’s play Everyone’s Fine with Virginia Woolf and Studio Créole for The Manchester International Festival. In 2011, John received a Lucille Lortel Award and Boston’s Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Director for Gatz. He is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, a United States Artists Fellowship, and a Doris Duke Performing Artist Award. John was born in North Carolina and raised in Georgia and holds a degree in English and Theater Studies from Yale.

Elevator Repair Service is a New York City-based company that creates original works for live theatre with an ongoing ensemble. The company’s sources range from found material (transcripts of trials, old movies, YouTube videos) to literature and conventional plays (both classical and contemporary). Founded in 1991, ERS has authored an extensive body of work that includes 19 original theatrical productions. These have earned the company a loyal following and made it one of New York’s most highly acclaimed experimental theatre companies. ERS’s productions share a commitment to risk-taking and reinvention, blending unusual texts with innovations in theatrical form. The finished works feature ERS’s signature dynamic performance style and playful sense of humor coupled with a rigorous commitment to psychologically complex performances. ERS has received numerous awards and distinctions including an Obie for Sustained Excellence, The Foundation for Contemporary Arts Theater Grant, and the Theatre Communications Group’s Peter Zeisler Memorial Award for Outstanding Achievement. ERS ensemble members have received Obies for Sound Design and Sustained Excellence in Performance and Lighting Design. Elevator.org @erstheater

CAST

Laurena Allan (Performer) Laurena has performed in all full production runs of Gatz, as well as Fondly, Collette Richland (written by Sibyl Kempson). New York stage credits include The Sasquatch Rituals (Sibyl Kempson) at The Kitchen, House (writer/director Richard Maxwell), Hello School (writer/director Christina Masciotti), The Fabulous Johnny Cash Show and Gravel’s Spine (Ontological-Hysteric Theater), Laguna Beach (HERE Arts Center), Vincent 1979 (Ensemble Studio Theatre);, Pericles (Workhouse Theatre), and Laurena’s Pancake Party (creator and performer). Films include Blue Jasmine and Silent Love of the Fish. She was the executive producer of “Whereabouts Unknown” by Mojo Nixon.

Frank Boyd (Performer) Frank is an actor and writer whose original works include The Holler Sessions, Patti & The Kid, and an upcoming piece about baseball set in post-apocalyptic Iowa. Most recently, he has been touring with Half Straddle’s Is This a Room. Frank has also performed with Elevator Repair Service in The Select (The Sun Also Rises) and with Young Jean Lee’s Theater Company in Straight White Men.
Jim Fletcher (Performer) Jim has performed in all full production runs of Gatz for Elevator Repair Service. He is a founding member of New York City Players theatre company, and he often performs with The Wooster Group, most recently in A Pink Chair (In Place of a Fake Antique). He was a 2012 recipient of the Obie Award for Sustained Excellence in Performance. His recent (2019) productions include Bro-Tox (La Mama, dir. Sean Lewis) and Pollock (PS21 Chatham, NY, dir. Paul Desveaux).

Ross Fletcher (Performer) Dr. Ross Fletcher is the Chief of Staff Emeritus of Washington DC’s VA Medical Center. He has played the role of Henry C. Gatz since 2005.

Lindsay Hockaday (Performer and Associate Producer) Lindsay is an Elevator Repair Service ensemble member and director of education programs. As a performer she has been in Gatz; Shuffle; Fondly, Collette Richland; The Select (The Sun Also Rises) (tours); and Measure for Measure. She also performs with Sibyl Kempson’s 7 Daughters of Eve Theater & Performance Co. She runs an interdisciplinary arts program in a New York City public school via The Kitchen.

Maggie Hoffman (Performer) Maggie is a founder of the avant-punk performance ensemble Radiohole and the artist-run venue The Collapsible Hole in New York City. She has performed in a number of Elevator Repair Service (ERS) productions, and designs graphics for ERS, Clubbed Thumb, and Target Margin Theater, among others.

Robert M. Johanson (Performer) Robert is a freelance performer/composer/director in New York City. He is a founding member of Nature Theater of Oklahoma, and has performed with them in No Dice, Poetics: a Ballet Brut, Romeo and Juliet, and No President. Robert also composed music for and performed in Nature Theater’s epic cycle Life and Times: Episodes 1-9, part of which won an Obie Award in 2013. Robert has worked with many other companies both in New York City and abroad including: 7 Daughters of Eve Theater and Performance Co., Radiohole, Witness Relocation, Jim Findlay, The Civilians, Von Krahli, Lithuanian National Drama Theatre, and Spreatific Eckly.

Vin Knight (Performer) With Elevator Repair Service, Vin has performed in Everyone’s Fine with Virginia Woolf; Measure for Measure; Fondly, Collette Richland; Shuffle; The Select (The Sun Also Rises); The Sound and the Fury; No Great Society; and Gatz. Other stage credits include The Music Man (Sharon Playhouse), Spam (JACK), Our Man in Havana (Portland Stage), Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (2013 Broadway revival), Marie Antoinette (American Repertory Theater and Yale Repertory Theatre), The Temperamentals (The Barrow Group), and U.S. Drag (Clubbed Thumb). Film and TV credits include Orange Is the New Black, Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt, Succession, Bull, The Blacklist, Homeland, Younger, and Robot Stories. He is a graduate of Yale University.

Annie McNamara (Performer) Broadway: Slave Play. With ERS Annie has performed in Gatz and The Sound and the Fury. Selected theatre: Iowa (Playwrights Horizons, Lucille Lortel nomination); We’re Gonna Be Okay (Humana/Actors Theatre of Louisville); Map of Virtue (13P); That Pretty Pretty (Rattlestick); Rapture, Blister, Burn (Huntington). Film & TV: Blue Jasmine, “Orange is the New Black,” “The Knick,” “Mozart in the Jungle.” With Clubbed Thumb, where she is an affiliated artist: The World my Mama Raised; Tomb of King Tot; 41-Derful; Lay Me Down, Justin Timberlake; U.S. Drag.

Gavin Price (Performer) Gavin has performed with Elevator Repair Service in Gatz; Everyone’s Fine with Virginia Woolf; Measure for Measure; The Select (The Sun Also Rises); The Sound and the Fury; Arguendo; Fondly, Collette Richland, and A Sort of Joy (MoMA). His film performances include Boccamazzlo Construction, Noah, and Facebiters. His other projects include The Return of Adam (Metropolitan Museum of Art), XX-ID (New Museum), Merce Cunningham Retrospective (MCA), Face the Music (Kaufman Center), Saint Fortune, co-founder. He has also performed and designed with
Aaron tours regionally including Mark having Department Rhode has credits Louisa CREATIVE NYCPlayers, collaborators and Ben 2014 Kempson has worked Phoenix Melbourne. Knot include The Theater appearing Said for Scott CabinFever, many of Amodt of Joneses, nominated A for Shepherd (Performer) Scott has performed with Elevator Repair Service since 1994, in Measure for Measure, No Great Society, Gatz (Obie Award), Total Fictional Lie, Cab Legs, Shut Up I Tell You (I Said Shut Up I Tell You), and McGurk. He has been a performer with The Wooster Group since 1997, appearing in over a dozen pieces including The Town Hall Affair; Cry Trojans!; Vieux Carré; Hamlet; Poor Theater (Obie and Bessie Awards); North Atlantic, and To You, The Birdie! His other theatre credits include Young Jean Lee’s Straight White Men, The Village Bike with Greta Gerwig, Athol Fugard’s Blood Knot, and his own three-person Macbeth which will premiere in May at the Malthouse Theater in Melbourne. His films include First Cow, The Report, El Camino: A Breaking Bad Movie, X-Men: Dark Phoenix, Hostiles, Jason Bourne, and Bridge of Spies, and he has played recurring roles on Bluff City Law, True Detective, Wormwood, and The Young Pope.

Susie Sokol (Performer) Susie is a second-grade teacher at St. Ann’s School in Brooklyn where she has taught since 1996. She began performing with Elevator Repair Service (ERS) in 1992. Since then, she has appeared in all ERS productions. She has also worked with theatre artists Katherine Profeta, Sibyl Kempson, and Tina Satter, and appeared in visual artist Sara Greenberger Rafferty’s short video in the 2014 Whitney Biennial exhibition.

Ben Jalosa Williams (Performer and Sound Designer) Ben is an award-winning sound designer, actor, and director who has worked with Elevator Repair Service since 2004 on numerous productions. Other collaborators include minor theater with Julia Jarcho, Christina Masciotti, The Wooster Group, NYCPlayers, Big Dance Theater, Spiegelwolr, and many others. His original show Mind On Heaven continues to tour. benwilliamsdotcom.com

CREATIVE AND TECHNICAL TEAM

Louisa Thompson (Scenic Designer) Louisa is a designer and a creator of theatrical work for young audiences. As lead artist she created Washeteria, a site-specific all-ages event. Her other off-Broadway credits include [Sic] and the Obie and Hewes Award-winning Blasted at Soho Rep. As well as working with Elevator Repair Service on Gatz, her New York credits include Signature Theatre, The Play Company, Theatreworks USA, Playwrights Horizons, and The Foundry Theater Company. Regionally she has worked with Berkeley Repertory Theatre, The Kirk Douglas Theater, The Papermill Playhouse, and The Children’s Theatre Company of Minneapolis, amongst others. A Yale School of Drama (MFA) and Rhode Island School of Design (BFA) graduate she is associate professor in the Hunter College Department of Theatre.

Colleen Werthmann (Costume Designer) Colleen is an original member of Elevator Repair Service, having performed in and/or designed nearly every show in the company’s first 18 years. She is also an Emmy-nominated comedy writer and an accomplished off-Broadway, TV, and film actor.

Mark Barton (Lighting Designer) Mark has worked with Elevator Repair Service on many productions including Measure for Measure (with Ryan Seelig), The Select (The Sun Also Rises), The Sound and the Fury, and Gatz. His work on Broadway includes Amelie (with Jane Cox), The Real Thing, and The Realistic Joneses, and off Broadway he has worked with The Public, New York Theatre Workshop, Soho Rep, and many others. An Obie Award winner, he has worked extensively in New York City and regionally for companies including Center Theater Group, Yale Rep, Actors Theatre of Louisville, and many others.

Aaron Amodt (Technical Director) Aaron has been involved with a number of ERS productions including tours of Gatz; Everyone’s Fine with Virginia Woolf; The Select (The Sun Also Rises); Fondly, Collette

Richland. In New York City he has worked with New York Theatre Workshop on Slave Play, What the Constitution Means to Me, Othello, Hadestown, and Lazarus. He has been involved with tours such as A Billion Nights On Earth (Lucidity Suitcase Intercontinental) and Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus. Outside of theatre Aaron collects personal ephemera and makes ghost photographs which you can find on IG @amodttech.

Steve Bodow (Associate Director) is an ERS co-founder and board member who, along with John Collins, was artistic director of the company from 1996–2004, co-directing pieces including Language Instruction, Total Fictional Lie, Cab Legs, and Room Tone. He is currently executive producer and showrunner of Netflix’s Patriot Act with Hasan Minhaj. He was previously EP for The Daily Show with Trevor Noah and, prior to that, EP and head writer for The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, where he won a combined 14 Emmys.

Maurina Lioce (Stage Manager) Maurina has been a member of Elevator Repair Service since 2014, stage managing all productions including The Sound and the Fury; Arguendo; The Select (The Sun Also Rises) (tours); Gatz (tours); Fondly, Collette Richland; Measure for Measure; and Everyone’s Fine with Virginia Woolf. Other New York City stage management credits include Half Straddle, Adrienne Truscott, Jim Findlay, David Byrne, Sibyl Kempson’s 7 Daughters of Eve Theater & Performance Co., Andrew Ondrejčak, Mike Iveson, Erin Markey, Suzanne Bocanegra, and Young Jean Lee.

Liz Nielsen (Production Manager) Liz has worked with ERS on Everyone’s Fine with Virginia Woolf and Gatz. Her New York credits include productions with Object Collection, Mason Holdings, minor theater, Clubbed Thumb, Soho Rep, Bushwick Starr, and Half Straddle.

Hanna Novak (Company Manager) Hanna is a playwright living in New York. Her plays have been presented in NYC at the New Ohio Theatre, The Frederick Loewe Theatre at Hunter College, and the Performing Garage. She has collaborated with Tina Satter/Half Straddle, minor theater, and Liz Magic Laser, among others. Her work has been supported by residencies through The Wooster Group and the Ucross Foundation. Hanna has been a member of Elevator Repair Service since 2015. MFA: Playwriting, Hunter College.

Jason Sebastian (Sound Engineer) Jason has worked with Elevator Repair Service on the off-Broadway, national, and international tours of The Select (The Sun Also Rises), Gatz, Arguendo, and Measure For Measure. In New York he has been involved in projects with Radiohole, Young Jean Lee’s Theater Company, MVWorks, and Tara O’Con, and has worked as a designer, engineer, and composer for several other New York-based and international theatre and dance companies for 20 years. He teaches at Miami University, Oxford, and was an adjunct faculty/staff for the College Conservatory of Music’s Sound Design program.

Dans Maree Sheehan (Associate Lighting Designer) Dans has worked with ERS for over 10 years across a number of projects and, having returned to her hometown of Melbourne, is excited to meet up again with her theatre family here in California. She is now having a great time as the production manager and creative producer at Circus Oz.

Ariana Smart Truman (Producer) Ariana has worked with ERS since 2003; as the producing director she shepherds the presentation and development of the company’s work. She most recently produced ERS’s production of the original play Everyone’s Fine with Virginia Woolf at Abrons Arts Center. In her 20-plus years as a producer of multidisciplinary performing arts, she has collaborated with individual artists, ensembles, and institutions, including Mike Iveson, Yehuda Duenyas, Collapsible Giraffe, Radiohole, The Wooster Group, HERE Arts Center, and Soho Rep. For ART/NY she teaches workshops on touring theatre, and in 1996 with Kate Valk she co-founded The Wooster Group’s Summer Institute, a free performance workshop for NYC youth, which she directs.
Gatz joins the previously announced The Tale of Despereaux for this season’s exceptional special event lineup.

The Tale of Despereaux begins November 21, 2019 and runs until January 5, 2020. A musical adventure awaits you this holiday season when the acclaimed PigPen Theatre Co. brings its inventive and imaginative retelling of the beloved, Newbery Medal–winning modern fable to Berkeley Rep. The courageous Despereaux, shunned by his community for his love of stories and humans, shows a forlorn kingdom that even the smallest voice can change the world – and that it only takes a little light to reveal the truth. An indie folk band that creates dazzling works of theatre, PigPen infuses this tale of bravery, forgiveness, and redemption with their masterful music, stunning stage effects, and witty performances. PigPen’s The Tale of Despereaux is a spellbinding musical treat that resonates with adults and children alike.

Individual tickets are now on sale and can be purchased online at berkeleyrep.org or by phone at 510 647-2949.

For the 2019-20 season, Berkeley Rep recognizes BART, Peet’s Coffee, and Wells Fargo, who have generously renewed their commitment as Berkeley Rep’s official season sponsors. Berkeley Rep is also delighted to have Bruce Golden and Michelle Mercer, Michael and Sue Steinberg, Jack and Betty Schafer, and The Strauch Kulhanjian Family on board as season sponsors.

About Berkeley Rep
Berkeley Repertory Theatre has grown from a storefront stage to an international leader in innovative theatre. Known for its ambition, relevance, and excellence, as well as its adventurous audience, the nonprofit has provided a welcoming home for emerging and established artists since 1968. Over 5.5 million people have enjoyed nearly 500 shows at Berkeley Rep, which have gone on to win six Tony Awards, seven Obie Awards, nine Drama Desk Awards, one Grammy Award, one Pulitzer Prize, and many other honors. Berkeley Rep received the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 1997. To formalize, enhance, and expand the processes by which Berkeley Rep makes theatre, The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep’s Center for the Creation and Development of New Work was launched in 2012. The Berkeley Rep School of Theatre engages and educates some 20,000 people a year and helps build the audiences of tomorrow with its nationally recognized teen programs. Berkeley Rep’s bustling facilities — which also include the 400-seat Peet’s Theatre, the 600-seat Roda Theatre, and a spacious campus in West Berkeley — are helping revitalize a renowned city. Be a Rep.

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